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MR. CUDWORTH'S SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE HON<sup>BLE</sup>

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

AT WESTMINSTER,

MARCH 47.

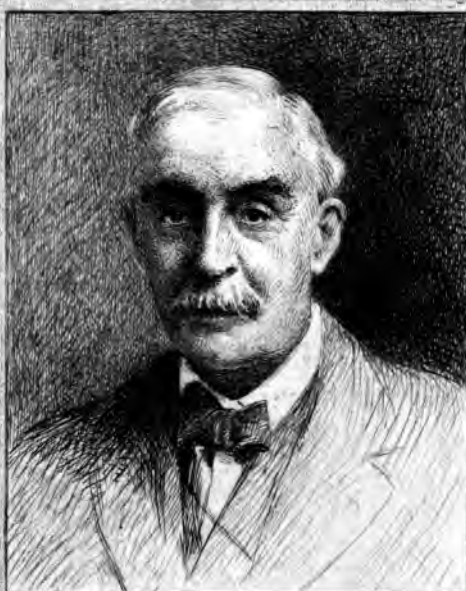
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**A SERMON.**



*Ralph*  
MR. CUDWORTH'S SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE HONBLE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

AT WESTMINSTER,

MARCH 31ST, 1647.

REPRINTED, AND DEDICATED TO

W. M. THACKERAY, ESQUIRE.

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TO

W. M. THACKERAY, ESQ.



“DEAR SIR,

“I called your attention, when you were last at Cambridge, to that noble Sermon of Dr. Ralph Cudworth, preached before the House of Commons in 1647; and which you have quoted in your highly valued Novel.

“This re-publication is, therefore, due to you; pray accept my dedication—not only with assurances of personal esteem, but also with an expression of gratitude, that those who adorn the literature of their own times, should also have religious feeling, to inculcate—in works designed to please and instruct the public—a knowledge of the eloquent and masterly statement of Christian truth, which the following Sermon contains.

“Yours, truly,

“JAMES BROGDEN.

“*Trinity College, Cambridge.*”



TO  
THE HONOURABLE  
HOUSE OF COMMONS.



THE scope of this Sermon, which not long since exercised your patience (Worthy Senatours) was not to contend for this or that opinion; but onely to perswade men to the life of Chrif, as the pith and kernel of all religion. Without which, I may boldly say, all the severall forms of religion in the World, though we please our selves never so much in them, are but so many severall dreams. And those many opinions about religion, that are every where so eagerly contended for on all sides, where this doth not lie at the bottome, are but so many shadows fighting with

one another: so that I may well say, of the true christian that is indeed possessed of the life of Christianity, in opposition to all those that are but lightly tinctured with the opinions of it, in the language of the poet,

*Ὅλος πέπνυται τοὶ δ' ὥς σκιαὶ ἀίσσουσι.*

Wherefore I could not think any thing else, either more necessary for christians in generall, or more seasonable at this time, then to stirre them up to the reall establishment of the righteousnesse of God in their hearts, and that participation of the divine nature, which the Apostle speaketh of. That so, they might not content themselves with mere phancies and conceits of Christ, without the Spirit of Christ really dwelling in them, and Christ himself inwardly formed in their hearts. Nor satisfie themselves, with the mere holding of right and orthodox opinions, as they conceive; whilst they are utterly devoid within of that divine life, which Christ came to kindle in men's souls; and therefore are so apt to spend all their zeal upon a violent obtruding of their *own opinions*, and apprehensions upon others, which

cannot give entertainment to them : which, besides its repugnancy to the doctrine and example of Christ himself, is like to be the bellows that will blow a perpetuall fire of discord and contention in christian common-wealths ; whilest in the mean time, these hungry, and starved opinions, devoure all the life and substance of religion, as the lean kine, in Pharaoh's Dream, did eat up the fat. Nor lastly, please them selves, onely in the violent opposing of other men's superstitions, according to the genius of the present times ; without substituting in the room of them, an inward principle of spirit, and life, in their own souls : for I fear many of us that pull down idols in churches, may set them up in our hearts ; and whilest we quarrel with painted glasse, make no scruple at all, of entertaining many foul lusts in our souls, and committing continuall idolatry with them.

This in generall, was the designe of this following Discourse, which you were pleased (Noble Senatours) not onely to expresse your good acceptance of, but also to give a reall signification of your great undeserved favour to the Authour of it. Who

therefore cannot, but as the least expression of his thankfulnesse, humbly devote it to you ; presenting it here again to your eye in the same form in which it was delivered to your eare. Desirous of nothing more, then that it might be some way usefull to you, to kindle in you the life and heat of that which is endeavoured here to be described upon paper: that you may expresse it, both in your private conversations, and likewise in all your publick employments for the common-wealth. That you may, by your kindly influence effectually encourage all goodnesse: and by vertue of your power and authority (to use the phrase of Solomon) scatter away all evil with your eye, as the sun by his beams scattereth the mists and vapours. That from you judgement may runne down like waters, and righteousnesse like a mighty stream, to refresh this whole land, that thirsteth after them. Which, whilst you distribute them plentifully to others, will bestow both strength and honour to your selves. For justice and righteousnesse are the establishment of every throne, of all civil power, and authority ; and if these should once forsake it,

though there be lions to support it, it could not stand long. These, together with a good peace, well settled in a common-wealth, are all the outward felicity we can expect till that happy time come, which the Prophet foretelleth, and is therefore more then a platonick idea; ‘when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calfe, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child lead them;—when the sucking child shall play on the hole of the aspe, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den;—when they shall not hurt nor destroy in all God’s holy mountaine, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.’

I have but one word more, if you please to give me leave; that after your care for the advancement of religion, and the publick good of the common-wealth, you would think it worthy of you, to promote ingenious learning, and cast a favourable influence upon it. I mean not, that onely, which furnisheth the pulpit, which you seem to be very regardfull of; but that which is more remote from such popular



use, in the severall kinds of it, which yet are all of them, both very subservient to religion, and usefull to the common-wealth. There is indeed a *Ψευδοπαιδεία*, as the philosopher tells us, a bastardly kind of literature, and a *Ψευδώνυμος γνώσις*, as the Apostle instructeth us, a knowledge falsely so called; which deserve not to be pleaded for. But the noble and generous improvement of our understanding faculty, in the true contemplation of the wisdom, goodness, and other attributes of God, in this great fabrick of the universe, cannot easily be disparaged, without a blemish cast upon the Maker of it. Doubtlesse, we may as well enjoy, that which God hath communicated of himself to the creatures, by this larger faculty of our understandings, as by those narrow and low faculties of our senses; and yet no body counts it to be unlawfull, to hear a lesson plaied upon the lute, or to smell at a rose. And these raised improvements of our naturall understandings, may be as well subservient and subordinate, to a divine light in our minds; as the naturall use of these outward creatures here below, to the life of God in our hearts. Nay, all true knowledge,

doth of its self naturally tend to God, who is the fountain of it: and would ever be raising of our souls up, upon its wings thither; did not we κατέχειν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ, detain it, and hold it down, in unrighteousness, as the Apostle speaketh. All philosophy to a wise man, to a truly sanctified mind, as he in Plutarch speaketh, is but ὕλη τῆς Θεολογίας, matter for divinity to work upon. Religion is the queen of all those inward endowments of the soul, and all pure naturall knowledge, all virgin and undeflowred arts and sciences are her handmaids, that rise up and call her blessed. I need not tell you, how much the skill of tongues and languages, besides the excellent use of all philology in generall, conduceth to the right understanding of the letter of sacred writings, on which the spirituall notions must be built; for none can possibly be ignorant of that, which have but once heard of a translation of the Bible. The Apostle exhorteth private christians, to ‘whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any vertue, if there be any praise, to think on those things;’ and therefore it may well become you

(Noble Gentlemen) in your publick spheare, to encourage so noble a thing as knowledge is, which will reflect so much lustre and honour back again upon your selves. That God would direct you in all your counsels, and still bleffe you and prosper you, in all your sincere endeavours, for the publick good, is the hearty prayer of

Your

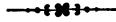
Most humble Servant,

RALPH CUDWORTH.

A SERMON.



## A SERMON.



And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments.

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.—1 *John* ii. 3, 4.

WE have much enquiry concerning knowledge in these latter times. The sonnes of Adam are now as busie as ever himself was, about the ‘Tree of Knowledge’ of good and evil, shaking the boughs of it, and scrambling for the fruit : whilest, I fear, many are too unmindfull of the ‘Tree of Life.’ And though there be now no Cherubims with their flaming swords, to fright men off from it ; yet the way that leads to it seems to be solitary and untrodden, as if there were but few that had any mind to tast of the fruit of it. There be many that speak of new glimpses, and discoveries of truth, of dawnings of Gospel-light ; and no question, but God hath reserved much of this for the very evening and sun-set of the world, for ‘in the latter dayes knowledge shall be increased :’ but yet *I wish* we could in the mean time see that ‘day

to dawn,' which the Apostle speaks of, and that 'day-starre to arise in men's hearts.' I wish whilest we talk of light, and dispute about truth, we could walk more as 'children of the light.' Whereas, if St. John's rule be good here in the Text, that no man truly knows Christ, but he that keepeth his commandments; it is much to be suspected, that many of us which pretend to light, have a thick and gloomy darknesse within over-spreading our souls. There be now many large volumes and discourses written concerning Christ, thousands of controversies discussed, infinite problems determined concerning his divinity, humanity, union of both together; and what not? so that our bookish Christians, that have all their religion in writings and papers, think they are now compleatly furnished with all kind of knowledge concerning Christ; and when they see all their leaves lying about them, they think they have a goodly stock of knowledge and truth, and cannot possibly misse of the way to heaven; as if religion were nothing but a little book-craft, a mere paper-skill. But if S. John's rule here be good, we must not judge of our knowing of Christ by our skill in books and papers, but by our keeping of his commandments. And that I fear will discover many of us (notwithstanding all this light which we boast of round about us) to have nothing but Egyptian darknesse within upon our hearts. The vulgar sort *think that they know* Christ enough, out of their

creeds and catechismes and confessions of faith : and if they have but a little acquainted themselves with these, and like parrets conned the words of them, they doubt not but that they are sufficiently instructed in all the mysteries of the kingdome of heaven. Many of the more learned, if they can but wrangle and dispute about Christ, imagine themselves to be grown great proficients in the school of Christ. The greatest part of the world, whether learned or unlearned, think, that there is no need of purging and purifying of their hearts, for the right knowledge of Christ and his Gospel ; but though their lives be never so wicked, their hearts never so foul within, yet they may know Christ sufficiently out of their treatises and discourses, out of their mere systems and bodies of divinity ; which I deny not to be usefull in a subordinate way : although our Saviour prescribeth his disciples another method, to come to the right knowledge of divine truths, by doing of God's will ; 'He that will do my Father's will (saith he) shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' He is a true christian indeed, not he that is onely book-taught, but he that is God-taught ; he that hath an 'unction from the Holy One' (as our Apostle calleth it) that teacheth him all things ; he that hath the Spirit of Christ within him, 'that searcheth out the deep things of God : for as no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him, even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God.' Inke and



paper can never make us christians, can never beget a new nature, a living-principle in us ; can never form Christ, or any true notions of spirituall things in our hearts. The Gospel, that new law which Christ delivered to the world, it is not merely a letter without us, but a quickning spirit within us. Cold theorems and maximes, dry and jejune disputes, lean syllogisticall reasonings, could never yet of themselves beget the least glympse of true heavenly light, the least sap of saving knowledge in any heart. All this is but the groping of the poore dark spirit of man after truth, to find it out with his own endeavours, and feel it with his own cold and benumbed hands. Words and syllables, which are but dead things, cannot possibly convey the living notions of heavenly truths to us. The secret mysteries of a divine life, of a new nature, of Christ formed in our hearts ; they cannot be written or spoken ; language and expressions cannot reach them ; neither can they ever be truly understood, except the soul it self be kindled from within, and awakened into the life of them. A painter that would draw a rose, though he may flourish some likenesse of it in figure and colour, yet he can never paint the sent and fragrancy ; or if he would draw a flame, he cannot put a constant heat into his colours ; he cannot make his penfil drop a sound, as the echo in the epigramme mocks at him — *si vis similem pingere, pingere sonum*. All the skill of cunning artizans and mechanicks cannot put a principle of

life into a statue of their own making. Neither are we able to inclose in words and letters, the life, soul, and essence of any spirituall truths ; and as it were to incorporate it in them. Some philosophers have determined, that ἀρετὴ is not διδακτὸν, vertue cannot be taught by any certain rules or precepts. Men and books may propound some directions to us, that may set us in such a way of life and practice, as in which we shall at last find it within our selves, and be experimentally acquainted with it : but they cannot teach it us like a mechanick art or trade. No, surely, there is a spirit in man : and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth this understanding. But we shall not meet with this spirit any where, but in the way of obedience : the knowledge of Christ, and the keeping of His commandments, must alwayes go together, and be mutuall causes of one another.

“ Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments.

“ He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

I come now unto these words themselves, which are so pregnant, that I shall not need to force out any thing at all from them : I shall therefore onely take notice of some few observations, which drop from them of their own accord, and then conclude with some application of them to our selves.

First then, if this be the right way and methode

of discovering our knowledge of Christ, by our keeping of his commandments; then we may safely draw conclusions concerning our state and condition, from the conformity of our lives to the will of Christ. Would we know whether we know Christ aright, let us consider whether the life of Christ be in us. *Qui non habet vitam Christi, Christum non habet*; he that hath not the life of Christ in him, he hath nothing but the name, nothing but a phansie of Christ, he hath not the substance of him. He that builds his house upon this foundation; not an airy notion of Christ swimming in his brain; but Christ really dwelling and living in his heart; as our Saviour himself witnesseth, he 'buildeth his house upon a rock;' and when the floods come, and the winds blow, and the rain descends, and beats upon it, it shall stand impregably. But he that builds all his comfort upon an ungrounded persuasion that God from all eternity hath loved him, and absolutely decreed him to life and happiness, and seeketh not for God really dwelling in his soul; he builds his house upon a quicksand, and it shall suddenly sink and be swallowed up: 'his hope shall be cut off, and his trust shall be a spider's web; he shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand, he shall hold it fast but it shall not endure.' We are no where commanded to pry into these secrets, but the wholesome counsell and advise given us, is this; 'to make our calling and election sure.' We have no warrant in scripture, to peep into these hidden

rolls and volumes of eternity, and to make it our first thing that we do when we come to Christ, to spell out our names in the starres, and to perswade our selves that we are certainly elected to everlasting happinesse: before we see the ‘image of God,’ in righteousness and true holinesse, shaped in our hearts. God’s everlasting decree is too dazeling and bright an object for us at first to set our eye upon: it is far easier and safer for us to look upon the raies of his goodnesse and holinesse as they are reflected in our own hearts; and there to read the mild and gentle characters of God’s love to us, in our love to him, and our hearty compliance with his heavenly will: as it is safer for us if we would see the sunne, to look upon it here below in a pale of water; then to cast up our daring eyes upon the body of the sun it self, which is too radiant and scorching for us. The best assurance that any one can have of his interest in God, is doubtlesse the conformity of his soul to him. Those divine purposes, whatsoever they be, are altogether unsearchable and unknowable by us, they lie wrapt up in everlasting darknesse, and covered in a deep abyffe; Who is able to fathom the bottome of them? Let us not therefore make this our first attempt towards God and religion, to perswade our selves strongly of these everlasting decrees: for if at our first sight we aime so high, we shall happily but scorch our wings, and be struck back with lightning, as those Giants of old were, that would needs attempt to

invade and assault heaven. And it is indeed a most giganticall essay, to thrust our selves so boldly into the lap of heaven ; it is the pranck of a Nimrod, of a mighty hunter, thus rudely to deal with God, and to force heaven and happineffe before his face whether he will or no. The way to obtain a good assurance indeed of our title to heaven, is not to clamber up to it, by a ladder of our own ungrounded perswasions ; but to dig as low as hell by humility and self-denyall in our own hearts : and though this may seem to be the furthest way about ; yet it is indeed the neereft and safest way to it. We must ἀναβαίνειν κάτω and καταβαίνειν ἄνω, as the Greek epigramme speaks, ascend downward, and descend upward ; if we would indeed come to heaven, or get any true perswasion of our title to it. The most gallant and triumphant confidence of a christian, riseth safely and surely upon this low foundation, that lies deep under ground ; and there stands firmly and stedfastly. When our heart is once tuned into a conformity with the word of God, when we feel our will perfectly to concur with his will, we shal then presently perceive a ‘spirit of adoption’ within our selves, teaching us to cry ‘Abba, Father.’ We shall not then care for peeping into those hidden records of eternity, to see whether our names be written there in golden characters : no, we shall find a copy of God’s thoughts concerning us, written in our own breasts. There we may read the characters of his favour to us, there

we may feel an inward sense of his love to us, flowing out of our hearty and unfained love to him, and we shall be more undoubtedly perswaded of it, then if any of those winged 'Watchmen' above, that are privie to heaven's secrets, should come and tel us, that they saw our names enrolled in those volumes of eternity. Whereas on the contrary; though we strive to perswade our selves never so confidently, that God from all eternity hath loved us, and elected us to life and happinesse; if we do yet in the mean time entertain any iniquity within our hearts, and willingly close with any lust; do what we can, we shall find many a cold qualme ever now and then seizing upon us at approaching dangers; and when death it self shall grimly look us in the face, we shall feel our hearts even to die within us, and our spirits quite faint away, though we strive to raise them and recover them never so much, with the strong waters and aqua vitæ of our own ungrounded presumptions. The least inward lust willingly continued in, will be like a worme, fretting the gourd of our jolly confidence, and presumptuous perswasion of God's love, and alwayes gnawing at the root of it: and though we strive to keep it alive, and continually besprinkle it with some dews of our own; yet it will alwayes be dying and withering in our bosomes. But a good conscience within, will be alwayes better to a christian, then 'health to his navell, and marrow to his bones;' it will be an everlasting cordiall to

his heart: it will be softer to him then a bed of downe, and he may sleep securely upon it, in the midst of raging and tempestuous seas; when the winds bluster, and the waves beat round about him. A good conscience, is the best looking-glasse of heaven; in which the soul may see God's thoughts and purposes concerning it, as so many shining starres reflected to it. 'Hereby we know that we know Christ, hereby we know that Christ loves us, if we keep his commandments.'

*Secondly.* If hereby onely we know that we know Christ, by our keeping his commandments; then the knowledge of Christ doth not consist merely in a few barren notions, in a form of certain dry and saplesse opinions. Christ came not into the world to fill our heads with mere speculations; to kindle a fire of wrangling and contentious dispute amongst us, and to warm our spirits against one another with nothing but angry and peevish debates, whilst in the mean time our hearts remain all ice within towards God, and have not the least spark of true heavenly fire to melt and thaw them. Christ came not to possess our brains onely with some cold opinions, that send down nothing but a freezing and benumbing influence upon our hearts.

Christ was *Vitæ Magister*, not *Scholæ*; and he is the best christian, whose heart beats with the truest pulse towards heaven; not he whose head spinneth out the finest cobwebs. He that endeavours really

to mortifie his lusts, and to comply with that truth in his life, which his conscience is convinced of; is neerer a christian, though he never heard of Christ, then he that believes all the vulgar articles of the christian faith, and plainly denyeth Christ in his life. Surely, the way to heaven that Christ hath taught us, is plain and easie, if we have but honest hearts: we need not many criticismes, many school-distinctions, to come to a right understanding of it. Surely, Christ came not to ensnare us and intangle us with captious niceties, or to puzzle our heads with deep speculations, and lead us through hard and craggie notions into the kingdome of heaven. I perswade my self, that no man shall ever be kept out of heaven, for not comprehending mysteries that were beyond the reach of his shallow understanding; if he had but an honest and good heart, that was ready to comply with Christ's commandments. 'Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?' that is, with high speculations to bring down Christ from thence: or, 'Who shall descend into the abyffe beneath?' that is with deep searching thoughts to fetch up Christ from thence: but loe, 'the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.' But I wish it were not the distemper of our times, to scare and fright men onely with opinions, and make them onely solicitous about the entertaining of this and that speculation, which will not render them any thing the better in their lives, or the liker unto God; whilst in the mean time



there is no such care taken about keeping of Christ's commandments, and being renewed in our minds according to the image of God, in righteoufnesse and true holinesse. We say, 'Loe, here is Christ; and loe, there is Christ,' in these and these opinions; whereas in truth, Christ is neither here, nor there, nor any where; but where the 'spirit of Christ,' where the 'life of Christ' is. Do we not now adayes open and lock up heaven, with the private key of this and that opinion of our own, according to our severall fancies as we please? And if any one observe Christ's commandments never so sincerely, and serve God, with faith and a pure conscience, that yet happely skils not of some contended for opinions, some darling notions; he hath not the right Shibboleth, he hath not the true watch-word; he must not passe the guards into heaven. Do we not make this and that opinion, this and that outward form, to be the wedding-garment, and boldly sentence those to outer darknesse that are not invested therewith? Whereas every true christian, finds the least dram of hearty affection towards God, to be more cordiall and sovereign to his soul; then all the speculative notions and opinions in the world: and though he study also to inform his understanding aright, and free his mind from all error and misapprehensions; yet it is nothing but the 'life of Christ' deeply rooted in his heart which is the chymicall elixer that he feeds upon. Had he 'all faith that he could remove mountains' (as S. Paul

speaks) had he ‘all knowledge, all tongues and languages;’ yet he prizeth one dram of love beyond them all. He accounteth him that feeds upon mere notions in religion, to be but an aiery and chameleon-like christian. He findeth himself now otherwise rooted and centred in God, then when he did before merely contemplate and gaze upon him: he tasteth and relisheth God within himself, he hath *quendam saporem Dei*, a certain favour of him; whereas before he did but rove and guesse at random at him. He feeleth himself safely anchored in God, and will not be diffwaded from it; though, perhaps, he skill not many of those subtleties, which others make the Alpha and Omega of their religion. Neither is he scared with those childish affrightments with which some would force their private conceits upon him; he is above the superstitious dreading of mere speculative opinions, as well as the superstitious reverence of outward ceremonies: he cares not so much for subtlety, as for soundnesse and health of mind. And indeed, as it was well spoken by a noble philosopher, *ἀνευ ἀρετῆς Θεὸς ὄνομα μόνον*, that without purity and virtue God is nothing but an empty name; so it is as true here, that without obedience to Christ’s commandments, without the ‘life of Christ’ dwelling in us, whatsoever opinions we entertain of him, Christ is but onely named by us, he is not known. I speak not here against a free and ingenuous enquiry into all truth, according to our severall abilities and opportunities, I plead not for the

captivating and enthralling of our judgments to the dictates of men; I do not disparage the naturall improvement of our understanding faculties by true knowledge, which is so noble and gallant a perfection of the mind: but the thing which I aime against is, the dispiriting of the life and vigour of our religion, by dry speculations, and making it nothing but a mere dead skeleton of opinions, a few dry bones without any flesh and sinews tyed up together: and the misplacing of all our zeal upon an eager prosecution of these, which should be spent to better purpose upon other objects. Knowledge indeed is a thing farre more excellent then riches, outward pleasures, worldly dignities, or anything else in the world besides holinesse, and the conformity of our wills to the will of God: but yet our happinesse consisteth not in it, but in a certain divine temper and constitution of soul, which is farre above it. But it is a piece of that corruption that runneth through humane nature, that we naturally prize truth more then goodnesse; knowledge, more then holinesse. We think it a gallant thing to be fluttering up to heaven with our wings of knowledge and speculation: whereas the highest mystery of a divine life here, and of perfect happinesse hereafter, consisteth in nothing but mere obedience to the Divine Will. Happinesse is nothing but that inward sweet delight, that will arise from the harmonious agreement between our wills and God's will. There is nothing contrary

to God in the whole world, nothing that fights againſt him but ſelf-will. This is the ſtrong caſtle, that we all keep garrifoned againſt heaven in every one of our hearts, which God continually layeth ſiege unto: and it muſt be conquered and demolifhed, before we can conquer heaven. It was by reaſon of this ſelf-will, that Adam fell in Paradife; that thoſe glorious angels, thoſe Morning-ſtarres, kept not their firſt ſtation, but dropt down from heaven like falling ſtarres, and funk into this condition of bitterneſſe, anxiety, and wretchedneſſe, in which now they are. They all intangled themſelves with the length of their own wings, they would needs will more and otherwiſe then God would will in them: and going about to make their wills wider, and to enlarge them into greater amplitude; the more they ſtrugled, they found themſelves the faſter pinioned, and crowded up into narrowneſſe and ſervility; inſomuch that now they are not able to uſe any wings at all, but inheriting the ſerpent's curſe, can onely creep with their bellies upon the earth. Now our onely way to recover God and happineſſe again, is not to ſoar up with our underſtandings, but to deſtroy this ſelf-will of ours: and then we ſhall find our wings to grow again, our plumes fairly ſpread, and our ſelves raiſed aloft into the free aire of perfect liberty, which is perfect happineſſe. There is nothing in the whole world able to do us good or hurt, but God and our own will; neither riches nor poverty, nor diſgrace nor

honour, nor life nor death, nor angels nor devils; but willing or not-willing, as we ought to do. Should hell it self cast all its fiery darts against us, if our will be right, if it be informed by the divine will; they can do us no hurt; we have then, (if I may so speak) an enchanted shield that is impenetrable, and will beare off all. God will not hurt us, and hell cannot hurt us, if we will nothing but what God wills. Nay, then we are acted by God himself, and the whole divinity floweth in upon us; and when we have cashiered this self-will of ours, which did but shackle and confine our soules, our wills shall then become truly free, being widened and enlarged to the extent of God's own will. 'Hereby we know that we know Christ indeed,' not by our speculative opinions concerning him, but by our keeping of his commandments.

*Thirdly*, if hereby we are to judge whether we truly know Christ, by our keeping of his commandments; 'so that he that saith he knoweth him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a lyar;' then, this was not the plot and designe of the Gospel, to give the world an indulgence to sin, upon what pretence soever. Though we are too prone to make such misconstructions of it: as if God had intended nothing else in it, but to dandle our corrupt nature, and contrive a smooth and easie way for us to come to happinesse, without the toilsome labour of subduing our lusts and sinful

affections. Or, as if the Gospel were nothing else but a declaration to the world of God's engaging his affections from all eternity, on some particular persons, in such a manner, as that he would resolve to love them, and dearly embrace them, though he never made them partakers of his image in righteousness and true holiness: and though they should remain under the power of all their lusts, yet they should still continue his beloved ones, and he would, notwithstanding, at last bring them undoubtedly into heaven. Which is nothing else, but to make the God that we worship, the God of the New Testament, a *προσωπολήπτης*, an acceptor of persons: and one that should encourage that in the world which is diametrically opposite to God's own life and being. And indeed nothing is more ordinary, then for us to shape out such monstrous and deformed notions of God unto our selves, by looking upon him through the coloured medium of our own corrupt hearts, and having the eye of our soul tinged by the suffusions of our own lusts. And therefore, because we mortals can fondly love and hate, and sometimes hug the very vices of those to whom our affections are engaged, and kiss their very deformities; we are so ready to shape out a deity like unto our selves, and to fashion out such a God, as will in Christ at least, hug the very wickedness of the world: and in those that be once his own, by I know not what, fond affection, appropriated to himself, connive at their

very finnes, so that they shall not make the least breach betwixt himself and them. Truly, I know not whether of the two be the worse idolatry, and of the deeper stain ; for a man to make a god out of a piece of wood, and ‘fall down unto it and worship it, and say, Deliver me, for thou art my God,’ as it is expressed in the prophet *Isaiah*, or to set up such an idol-god of our own imagination as this is, fashioned out according to the similitude of our own fondnesse and wickednesse : and when we should paint out God with the liveliest colours that we can possibly borrow from any created being, with the purest perfections that we can abstract from them ; to draw him out thus with the blackest coal of our own corrupt hearts ; and to make the very blots and blurs of our own souls, to be the letters, which we spell out his name by. Thus do we that are Children of the Night, made black and ugly representations of God unto our selves, as the *Ethiopians* were wont to do, copying him out according to our own likenesse ; and setting up that unto our selves for a God, which we love most dearly in our selves, that is, our lusts. But there is no such god as this any where in the world, but onely in some men’s false imaginations, who know not all this while, that they look upon themselves instead of God, and make an idol of themselves, which they worship and adore for him ; being so full of themselves, that whatsoever they see round about them, even God himself, they colour with

their own tincture : like him that Aristotle speaks of, that wheresoever he went, and whatsoever he looked upon, he saw still his own face, as in a glasse, represented to him. And therefore it is no wonder if men seem naturally more devoutly affected toward such an imaginary God, as we have now described, then to the true reall God, clothed with his own proper attributes ; since it is nothing but an image of themselves, which Narcissus-like they fall in love with : no wonder if they kisse and dandle such a baby-god as this, which like little children, they have dressed up out of the clouts of their own fond phancies, according to their own likeness, of purpose that they might play and sport with it. But God will ever dwell in spotlesse light, howsoever we paint him and disfigure him here below : he will still be circled about, with his own raies of unstained and immaculate glory. And though the Gospel be not God, as he is in his own brightness, but God veiled and masked to us, God in a state of humiliation, and condescent, as the sun in a rainbow ; yet it is nothing else but a clear and unspotted mirrour of divine holiness, goodness, purity ; in which attributes lies the very life and essence of God himself. The Gospel is nothing else, but God descending into the world in our form, and conversing with us in our likeness ; that he might allure, and draw us up to God, and make us partakers of his divine form. Θεὸς γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος



(as Athanasius speaks) *ὅτι ἡμᾶς ἐν ἑαυτῷ θεοποιήσῃ*, God was therefore incarnated and made man, that he might deifie us, that is (as S. Peter expresseth it), make us ‘partakers of the Divine nature.’ Now, I say, the very proper character and essential tincture of God himself, is nothing else but goodnesse. Nay, I may be bold to adde, That God is therefore God, because he is the highest and most perfect Good: and Good is not therefore Good, because God out of an arbitrary will of his, would have it so. Whatsoever God doth in the world, he doth it as it is fuitable to the highest goodnesse; the first idea, and fairest copy of which is his own essence. Vertue and holinesse in creatures, as Plato well discourseth in his *Euthyphro*, are not therefore good because God loveth them, and will have them be accounted such; but, rather, God therefore loveth them because they are in themselves simply good. Some of our own authors go a little further yet, and tell us, that God doth not fondly love himself, because he is himself, but therefore he loveth himself because he is the highest and most absolute goodnesse: so that if there could be anything in the world better then God, God would love that better then himself: but because he is essentially the most perfect good; therefore, he cannot but love his own goodnesse infinitely above all other things. And it is another mistake which sometimes we have of God, by shaping him out according to the model of our selves, when we

make him nothing but a blind, dark, impetuous self-will, running through the world; such as we our selves are furiously acted with, that have not the ballast of absolute goodnesse to poize and settle us. That I may therefore come nearer to the thing in hand: God who is absolute goodnesse, cannot love any of his creatures and take pleasure in them, without bestowing a communication of his goodnesse and likenesse upon them. God cannot make a Gospel, to promise men life and happinesse hereafter, without being regenerated, and made partakers of his holinesse. As soon may heaven and hell be reconciled together, and lovingly shake hands with one another, as God can be fondly indulgent to any sinne in whomsoever it be. As soon may light and darknesse be espoused together, and mid-night be married to the noon-day, as God can be joyned in a league of friendship to any wicked soul.

The great designe of God in the Gospel, is to clear up this mist of sin and corruption, which we are here surrounded with: and to bring up his creatures, out of the shadow of death, to the region of light above, the land of truth and holinesse. The great mystery of the Gospel, is to establish a god-like frame and disposition of spirit, which consists in righteousness and true holinesse, in the hearts of men. And Christ, who is the great and mighty Saviour, he came on purpose into the world; not onely to save us from fire and

brimstone, but also to save us from our sins. Christ hath therefore made an expiation of our sins, by his death upon the crosse, that we, being thus 'delivered out of the hands of' these our greatest 'enemies, might serve God without fear, in holinesse and righteousness before him all the dayes of our life.' This 'grace of God that bringeth salvation,' hath therefore 'appeared to all men,' in the Gospel, that it might 'teach us to deny ungodlinesse and worldly lusts, and that we should live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present world: looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' 'These things I write unto you (saith our Apostle a little before my text) that you sinne not:' therein expressing the end of the whole Gospel, which is not onely to cover sinne, by spreading the purple robe of Christ's death and sufferings over it, whilst it still remaineth in us with all its filth and noisomesse unremoved; but also, to convey a powerfull and mighty spirit of holinesse, to cleanse us, and free us from it. And this is a greater grace of God's to us then the former, which still go both together in the Gospel; besides the free remission and pardon of sinne in the blood of Christ, the delivering of us from the power of sinne by the 'spirit of Christ dwelling in our hearts.'

Chriſt came not into the world onely to caſt a mantle over us, and hide all our filthy ſores, from God's avenging eye, with his merits and righteousneſſe, but he came, likewise, to be a chirurgeon and phyſitian of ſouls to free us from the filth and corruption of them; which is more grievous and burdensome, more noyſome to a true-chriſtian, then the guilt of finne it ſelf. Should a poore, wretched, and diſeaſed creature, that is full of ſores and ulcers, be covered all over with purple, or clothed with ſcarlet; he would take but little contentment in it, whileſt his ſores and wounds remain upon him: and he had much rather be arraigned in rags, ſo he might obtain but ſoundneſſe and health within. The Goſpel is a true Bethſda, a 'pool of grace,' where ſuch poore, lame, and infirme creatures, as we are, upon the moving of God's ſpirit in it, may deſcend down, not onely to waſh our ſkin and outſide, but alſo to be cured of our diſeaſes within. And what ever the world thinks, there is a powerfull ſpirit that 'moves upon theſe waters,' the waters of the Goſpel for this new creation, the regeneration of ſouls; the very ſame ſpirit, that once 'moved upon the waters' of the univerſe at the firſt creation, and ſpreading its mighty wings over them, did hatch the new-born world into this perfection: I ſay, the ſame Almighty ſpirit of Chriſt ſtill worketh in the Goſpel, ſpreading its gentle, healing, quickening wings over our ſouls. The Goſpel is

not like Abana and Pharphar, those common rivers of Damascus, that could onely cleanse the outside ; but it is a true Jordan, in which such leprouse Naamans, as we all are, may ' wash and be clean.' ' Blessed indeed are they, whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose finnes are covered : Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sinne : ' but yet, rather blessed are they, whose finnes are removed like a morning-cloud, and quite taken away from them : ' Blessed,' thrice blessed, ' are they, that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied : Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Our Saviour Christ came (as John the Baptist tells us) ' with a fan in his hand, that he might throughly purge his floore and gather his wheat into his garner : but the chaff he will burn up, with unquenchable fire.' He came (as the prophet Malachy speaks) ' like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's sope ; to sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and to purifie all the sonnes of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.' Christ came not onely to write holiness to the Lord upon Aaron's forehead, and to put his ' Urim and Thummim ' upon his breast-plate, but ' This is the covenant, saith the Lord, that I will make with them in those dayes ; I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and then I will be their God, and they shall be my people : they shall be all kings and

priests unto me.' 'God sent his own sonne (saith St. Paul) in the likenesse of sinful flesh, and by a sacrifice for sinne, condemned sinne in the flesh : that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' The 'first Adam,' as the Scripture tells us, brought in a reall defilement, which like a noisome leprosie, hath overspread all mankind : and therefore 'the second Adam' must not only fill the world with a conceit of holinesse, and meer imaginary righteousness ; but he must really convey such an immortall seed of grace into the hearts of true believers, as may prevaile still more and more in them, till it have at last quite wrought out that poison of the Serpent. Christ, that was nothing but divinity dwelling in a Tabernacle of flesh, and God himself immediately acting a humane nature ; he came into the world to kindle here that divine life amongst men, which is certainly dearer unto God, then any thing else whatsoever in the world ; and to propagate this celestiall fire, from one heart still unto another, untill the end of the world. Neither is he, or was he ever absent from this spark of his divinity, kindled amongst men, wheresoever it be, though he seem bodily to be withdrawn from us. He is the standing, constant, inexhausted fountain, of this divine light and heat ; that still toucheth every soul that is enlivened by it, with an out-stretched ray, and freely lends his beams, and disperfeth his influence to all, from the

beginning of the world to the end of it. ‘We all receive of his fulnesse, grace for grace,’ as all the starres in heaven are said to light their candles at the sun’s flame. For though his body be withdrawn from us, yet by the lively and virtuall contact of his Spirit, he is alwayes kindling, cheering, quickening, warming, enlivening hearts. Nay, this divine life begun and kindled in any heart, wheresoever it be, is something of God in flesh ; and, in a sober and qualified fence, divinity incarnate ; and all particular christians, that are really possessed of it, so many mysticall Christs. And God forbid, that God’s own life and nature here in the world, should be forlorn, forsaken, and abandoned of God himself. Certainly, where-ever it is, though never so little, like a sweet, young, tender babe, once born in any heart ; when it crieth unto God the father of it, with pitifull and bemoaning looks imploring his compassion ; it cannot chuse but move his fatherly bowels, and make them yerne, and turn towards it, and by strong sympathy, draw his compassionate arm to help and relieve it. Never was any tender infant, so dear to those bowels that begat it, as an infant new-born Christ, formed in the heart of any true believer, to God the father of it. Shall the ‘children of this world,’ ‘the sonnes of darknesse,’ be moved with such tender affection, and compassion, towards the fruit of their bodies, their own naturall offspring ; and shall God who is the ‘Father of lights,’ the fountain of all goodnesse, be moved with no

compassion towards his true spirituall offspring, and have no regard to those sweet babes of light, ingendered by his own beams in men's hearts, that in their lovely countenances, bear the resemblance of his own face, and call him their father? Shall he see them lie fainting, and gasping, and dying here in the world, for want of nothing to preserve and keep them, but an influence from him, who first gave them life and breath? No; heare the language of God's heart, heare the sounding of his bowels towards them: 'Is it Ephraim my dear sonne? Is it that pleasant child? since I spake of him I do earnestly remember him, my bowels, my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.' If those expressions of goodnesse and tender affection here amongst creatures, be but drops of that full ocean that is in God; how can we then imagine, that this 'Father of our spirits,' should have so little regard to his own dear offspring, I do not say our souls, but that which is the very life and soul of our souls, the 'life of God' in us; which is nothing else but God's own self communicated to us, his own Sonne born in our hearts; as that he should suffer it to be cruelly murdered in its infancy by our sinnes, and like young Hercules in its very cradle, to be strangled by those filthy vipers; that he should see him to be crucified by wicked lusts, nailed fast to the crosse by invincible corruptions; pierced and gored on every side with the poisoned spears of the



Devil's temptations, and at last to give up the ghost; and yet his tender heart not at all relent, nor be all this while impassioned with so sad a spectacle? Surely, we cannot think he hath such an adamant breast, such a flinty nature as this is. What then? must we say that though indeed he be willing, yet he is not able, to rescue his crucified and tormented Sonne, now bleeding upon the crosse; to take him down from thence and save him? Then must Sinne be more powerfull then God: that weak, crasse, and sickly thing, more strong then the 'Rock of ages;' and the Devil the 'prince of darkness,' more mighty then the God of light. No surely, there is a weakness and impotency in all Evil, a masculine strength and vigour in all Goodness: and therefore doubtlesse the highest good, the *πρῶτον ἀγαθόν* as the philosophers call it, is the strongest thing in the world. *Nil potentius Summo Bono.* God's Power displayed in the world, is nothing but his Goodness strongly reaching all things, from height to depth, from the highest heaven, to the lowest hell: and irresistibly imparting it self to every thing, according to those severall degrees in which it is capable of it. Have the fiends of darkness then, those poore forlorn spirits, that are fettered and locked up in the chains of their own wickedness, any strength to withstand the force of infinite goodness, which is infinite power? or do they not rather skulk in holes of darkness, and flie like bats and owls, before the approaching beams of this Sun

of Righteousnesse? Is God powerfull to kill and to destroy, to damne and to torment, and is he not powerfull to save? Nay, it is the sweetest flower in all the garland of his attributes, it is the richest diamond in his crown of glory, that he is 'mighty to save:' and this is farre more magnificent for him, then to be stiled mighty to destroy. For that, except it be in the ways of justice, speak no power at all, but mere impotency; for the root of all power is goodnesse. Or must we say lastly, that God indeed is able to rescue us out of the power of sinne and Satan, when we sigh and grone towards him, but yet sometimes to exercise his absolute authority, his uncontrollable dominion, he delights rather in plunging wretched souls down into infernall night, and everlasting darknesse? What shall we then make the God of the whole world? Nothing but a cruell and dreadfull Erynnis, with curled fiery snakes about his head, and firebrands in his hands, thus governing the world? Surely this will make us either secretly to think, that there is no God at all in the world, if he must needs be such, or else to wish heartily there were none. But doubtlesse, God will at last, confute all these our misapprehensions of him, he will unmask our hypocriticall pretences, and clearly cast the shame of all our sinfull deficiencies, upon our selves, and vindicate his own glory from receiving the least stain or blemish by them. In the mean time, let us know, that the Gospel now requireth, far more of us, then ever

Law did ; for it requireth ‘ a new creature,’ ‘ a divine nature,’ ‘ Christ formed in us :’ but yet withall, it bestoweth a ‘ quickening spirit,’ an ‘ enlivening power,’ to enable us to expresse that which is required of us. Whosoever therefore truly ‘ knows Christ,’ the same also keepeth Christ’s commandments. But, ‘ he that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him.’

I have now done with the First part of my discourse, concerning those observations which arise naturally from the words, and offer themselves to us : I shall in the next place, proceed to make some generall application of them all together.

Now therefore, I beseech you, let us consider, whether or no we know Christ indeed : not by our acquaintance with systems and modell’s of divinity ; not by our skill in books and papers but by our ‘ keeping of Christ’s commandments.’ All the books and writings which we converse with, they can but represent spirituall objects to our understandings ; which yet we can never see in their own true figure, colour, and proportion, untill we have ‘ a divine light’ within to irradiate and shine upon them. Though there be never such excellent truths concerning Christ, and His gospel, set down in words and letters ; yet they will be but unknown characters to us, untill we have a ‘ living spirit’ within us, that can decypher

them : untill the same spirit, by secret whispers in our hearts, do comment upon them which did at first endite them. There be many that understand the Greek and Hebrew of the Scripture, the originall languages in which the Text was written, that never understood the 'language of the Spirit.' There is a *Caro* and a *Spiritus*, a flesh and a spirit, a bodie and a soul, in all the writings of the Scriptures; it is but the flesh, and body, of divine truths, that is printed upon paper; which many moths of books and libraries do onely feed upon; many walking skeletons of knowledge, that bury and entombe truths in the living sepulchres of their souls, do onely converse with: such as never did anything else, but pick at the mere bark and rind of truths, and crack the shels of them. But there is a soul, and spirit, of divine truths that could never yet be congealed into inke, that could never be blotted upon paper, which by a secret traduction and conveiance, passeth from one soul unto another, being able to dwell and lodge nowhere but in a spirituall being, in a living thing; because it self is nothing but life and spirit. Neither can it, where indeed it is, expresse it self sufficiently in words and sounds, but it will best declare and speak it self in actions: as the old manner of writing among the Egyptians was, not by words, but things. The life of divine truths is better expressed in actions then in words, because actions are more living things then words; words are nothing but the dead resemblances and pictures of those truths which live

and breathe in actions : and the ‘kingdome of God (as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh) conſiſteth not in word but in life and power.’ Τὰ πρόβατα, οὐ χορτὸν φέροντα τοῖς ποιμέσιν ἐπιδεικνύει πόσον ἔφαγεν· (ſaith the morall philoſopher) ἀλλὰ τὴν νομὴν ἔσω πέψαντα, ἔριον ἔξω φέρει καὶ γάλα· Sheep do not come and bring their fodder to their ſhepherd and ſhew him how much they eat, but inwardly concocting and digeſting it, they make it appear, by the fleece which they wear upon their backs, and by the milke which they give. And let not us chriſtians affect onely to talk and diſpute of Chriſt, and ſo meaſure our knowledge of him by our words ; but let us ſhew ἀπὸ τῶν θεωρημάτων πεφθέντων τὰ ἔργα, our knowledge concocted into our lives and actions ; and then let us really manifeſt that we are Chriſt's ſheep indeed, that we are his diſciples by that fleece of holineſſe which we wear, and by the fruits that we dayly yield in our lives and converſations ; for ‘herein (ſaith Chriſt) is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit ; ſo ſhall ye be my diſciples.’ Let us not (I beſeech you) judge of our knowing Chriſt, by our ungrounded perſwaſions, that Chriſt from all eternity hath loved us, and given himſelf particularly for us, without the conformity of our lives to Chriſt's commandments, without the reall partaking of the image of Chriſt in our hearts. The great myſterie of the Goſpel, it doth not lie onely in Chriſt without us (though we muſt know alſo what he hath done for us), but the very pith and

kernel of it consists in Christ inwardly formed in our hearts. Nothing is truly ours, but what lives in our spirits. Salvation it self cannot save us as long as it is onely without us; no more then health can cure us, and make us sound, when it is not within us, but somewhere at distance from us; no more then arts and sciences, whilst they lie onely in books and papers without us, can make us learned. The Gospel, though it be a soveraigne and medicinall thing in it self, yet the mere knowing and believing of the history of it, will do us no good: we can receive no vertue from it, till it be inwardly digested and concocted into our souls; till it be made ours and become a living thing in our hearts. The Gospel, if it be onely without us, cannot save us; no more then that physitian's bill could cure the ignorant patient of his disease, who, when it was commended to him, took the paper onely, and put it up in his pocket, but never drunk the potion that was prescribed in it. All that Christ did for us in the flesh, when he was here upon earth; from his lying in a manger, when he was born in Bethlehem, to his bleeding upon the crosse on Golgotha; it will not save us from our sinnes, unlesse Christ by his spirit dwell in us. It will not avail us, to believe that he was born of a Virgin, unlesse the 'power of the Most High overshadow' our hearts, and beget him there likewise. It will not profit us, to believe that he died upon the crosse for us, unlesse we be 'baptized into his death,' by the mortification of

all our lusts ; unlesse the old man of sinne be crucified in our hearts. Christ indeed hath made an expiation for our sinnes upon his crosse ; and the blood of Christ is the onely soveraign balsame to free us from the guilt of them, but yet besides the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon us, we must be made partakers also of his spirit. Christ came into the world, as well to redeem us from the power and bondage of our sinnes, as to free us from the guilt of them. ' You know (saith S. John) that he was manifested to take away our sinnes ; whosoever therefore abideth in him, sinneth not ; whosoever sinneth, hath not seen nor known him.' Loe the end of Christ's coming into the world, loe a designe worthy of ' God manifested in the flesh.' Christ did not take all those paines ; to lay aside his robes of glory, and come down hither into the world ; to enter into a virgin's wombe ; to be born in our humane shape, and be laid a poore crying infant in a manger ; and having no ' form nor comlineffe' at all upon him, to take upon him ' the form of a servant ;' to undergo a reproachfull and ignominious life, and at last to be abandoned to a shamefull death, a death upon the crosse ; I say, he did not do all this, merely to bring in a notion into the world, without producing any reall and substantiall effect at all, without the changing, mending, and reforming of the world : so that men should still be as wicked as they were before, and as much under the power of the Prince of Darknesse ; onely, they

should not be thought so : they should still remain as full of all the filthy sores of sinne and corruption as before ; onely, they should be accounted whole. Shall God come down from heaven, and pitch a tabernacle amongst men ? Shall he undertake such a huge designe, and make so great a noise of doing something, which, when it is all fumm'd up, shall not at last amount to a reality ? Surely, Christ did not undergo all this to so little purpose ; he would not take all this paines for us, that he might be able, at last, to put into our hands nothing but a blank. He was with child, he was in pain and travel ; and hath he brought forth nothing but wind, hath he been delivered of the eastwind ? Is that great designe that was so long carried in the wombe of eternity, now proved abortive, or else nothing but a mere windy birth ? No surely, the end of the Gospel is life and perfection, 'tis a divine nature, 'tis a godlike frame and disposition of spirit ; 'tis to make us partakers of the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, without which, salvation it self were but a notion. Christ came indeed into the world, to make an expiation and atonement for our sinnes ; but the end of this was, that we might eschew sinne, that we might forsake all ungodliness and worldly lusts. The Gospel declares pardon of sinne to those that are heavy laden with it, and willing to be disburdened, to this end, that it might quicken and enliven us to new obedience. Whereas, otherwise, the guilt of



finne might have detained us in horroure and despair; and so have kept us still more strongly under the power of it, in sad and dismall apprehensions of God's wrath provoked against us, and inevitably falling on us. But Christ hath now appeared, like a day-starre with most cheerfull beames; nay, he is the 'Sun of Righteousnesse' himself; which hath risen upon the world with his healing wings, with his exhilarating light, that he might chase away all those black despairing thoughts from us. But Christ did not rise, that we should play, and sport, and wantonise with his light; but that we should do the works of the day in it: that we should walk *ἐν σαρκί* (as the apostle speaketh) not in our night-clothes of sinful deformity, but clad all over with the comely garments of light. The Gospel is not big with child of a phancie, of a mere conceit of righteousness without us, hanging at distance over us; whilst our hearts within, are nothing but cages of unclean birds, and like houses continually haunted with devils, nay, the very rendezvous of those fiends of darkness. Holiness is the best thing that God himself can bestow upon us, either in this world or the world to come. True evangelicall holiness, that is, Christ formed in the hearts of believers, is the very cream and quintessence of the Gospel. And were our hearts sound within, were there not many thick and dark fumes, that did arise from thence, and cloud our understandings, we could not easily conceive the substance of heaven

it self, to be any thing else but holinesse, freed from those encumbrances that did ever clog it, and accloy it here; neither should we wish for any other heaven besides this. But many of us are like those children, whose stomacks are so vitiated by some disease, that they think ashes, coal, mudwall, or any such trash, to be more pleasant then the most wholesome food: such sickly and distempered appetites have we about these spirituall things, that hanker after I know not what vain shews of happinesse, whilst in the mean time we neglect that which is the onely true food of our souls, that is able solidly to nourish them up to everlasting life. Grace is holinesse militant, holinesse encumbered with many enemies and difficulties, which it still fights against, and manfully quits it self of: and glory is nothing else, but holinesse triumphant; holinesse with a palme of victorie in her hand, and a crown upon her head. *Deus ipse, cum omni sua bonitate, quatenus extra me est, non facit me beatum; sed quatenus in me est:* God himself cannot make me happy, if he be onely without me; and unlesse he give in a participation of himself, and his own likenesse into my soul. Happiness is nothing but the releasing and unfettering of our souls from all these narrow, scant, and particular good things; and the espousing of them to the highest and most universall good, which is not this or that particular good, but goodnesse it self: and this is the same thing that we call holinesse: which, because ~~we~~ our

felves are fo little acquainted with, being, for the moft part, ever courting a mere fhadow of it, therefore we have fuch low, abject, and beggerly conceits thereof; whereas, it is in it felf the moft noble, heroically, and generous thing in the world. For, I mean by holineffe, nothing elfe but God stamped and printed upon the foul. And we may please our felves with what conceits we will; but fo long as we are void of this, we do but dream of heaven, and, I know not what, fond Paradife; we do but blow up and down an airy bubble of our own phancies, which rifeth out of the froth of our vain hearts; we do but court a painted heaven, and woo happineffe in a picture: whilft, in the mean time, a true and reall hell will fuck in our fouls into it, and foon make us fenfible of a folid woe, and fubftantiall mifery. Divine wifdome hath fo ordered the frame of the whole univerfe, as that every thing fhould have a certain proper place, that fhould be a receptacle for it. Hell is the fink of all finne and wickedneffe. The ftrong magick of nature pulls and draws every thing continually to that place which is fuitable to it, and to which it doth belong; fo all thefe heavy bodies preffe downwards, towards the centre of our earth, being drawn in by it: in like manner hell, wherefoever it is, will, by ftrong fympathy, pull in all finne, and magnetically draw it to it felf: as true holineffe is alwayes breathing upwards, and fluttering towards heaven, ftriving to embosome it felf with God: and

it will at laſt undoubtedly be conjoynd with him ; no diſmall ſhades of darkneſſe can poſſibly ſtop it in its courſe, or beat it back :

*Ὡς αἰεὶ τὸ ὅμοιον ἄγει Θεὸς ὡς τὸ ὅμοιον.*

Nay, we do but deceive our ſelves with names ; hell is nothing but the orbe of ſinne and wickedneſſe, or elſe that hemiſphear of darkneſſe, in which all evil moves : and heaven is the oppoſite hemiſphear of light, or elſe, if you pleaſe, the bright orbe of truth, holineſſe, and goodneſſe : and we do actually in this life, inſtate our ſelves in the poſſeſſion of one or other of them. Take ſinne and diſobedience out of hell, and it will preſently clear up into light, tranquillity, ſerenity, and ſhine out into a heaven. Every true ſaint carrieth his heaven about with him, in his own heart ; and hell, that is without him, can have no power over him. He might ſafely wade through hell it ſelf, and like the three children, paſſe through the miſt of that fiery furnace, and yet not at all be ſcorched with the flames of it : he might ‘walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death,’ and yet ‘fear no evil.’ Sinne is the onely thing in the world that is contrary to God : God is light, and that is darkneſſe : God is beauty, and that is ugligneſſe and deformity. All ſinne is direct rebellion againſt God ; and with what notions ſoever we may ſugar it, and ſweeten it, yet God can never ſmile upon it, he will never make a truce with it. God declares open

warre againſt ſinne, and bids defiance to it ; for it is a professed enemy to God's own life and being. God, which is infinite goodneſſe, cannot but hate ſinne, which is purely evil. And though ſinne be, in it ſelf, but a poore, impotent, and crazy thing, nothing but ſtraitneſſe, poverty, and non-entity ; ſo that, of it ſelf, it is the moſt wretched and miſerable thing in the world, and needeth no further puniſhment beſides it ſelf ; yet divine vengeance beats it off ſtill further and further from God, and whereſoever it is, will be ſure to ſcourage it, and laſh it continually. God and ſinne can never agree together.

That I may therefore come yet nearer to our ſelves. This is the meſſage that I have now to declare unto you, that ‘ God is light, and in him is no darkneſſe at all ; if we ſay that we have fellowſhip with him, and walke in darkneſſe, we lie, and do not the truth.’ Chriſt and the Goſpel are light, and there is no darkneſſe at all in them, if you ſay that you know Chriſt and his Goſpel, and yet keep not Chriſt's commandments, but dearly hug your private darling corruptions, you are liars, and the truth is not in you ; you have no acquaintance with the God of light, nor the Goſpel of light. If any of you ſay that you know Chriſt, and have an intereſt in him, and yet (as I fear too many do) ſtill nourish ambition, pride, vainglory within your breſts ; harbour malice, revengefulneſſe, and cruell hatred to your neighbours in your hearts ; eagerly

scramble after this worldly pelfe, and make the strength of your parts and endeavours serve that blind mammon, the god of this world; if you wallow and tumble in the filthy puddle of fleshly pleasures, or if you aime onely at your selves in your lives, and make your selfe the compasse by which you sail, and the starre by which you steer your course, looking at nothing higher, and more noble then your selves; deceive not your selves, you have neither seen Christ, nor known him; you are deeply incorporated (if I may so speak) with the spirit of this world, and have no true sympathy with God and Christ—no fellowship at all with them. And (I beseech you) let us consider: be there not many of us that pretend much to Christ that are plainly in our lives as proud, ambitious, vainglorious as any others? Be there not many of us that are as much under the power of unruly passions,—as cruell, revengefull, malicious, censorious as others? that have our minds as deeply engaged in the world, and as much envassalled to riches, gain, profit, those great admired deities of the sonnes of men, and their souls as much overwhelmed and funke with the cares of this life? Do not many of us as much give our selves to the pleasures of the flesh, and though not without regrets of conscience, yet ever now and then secretly foke our selves in them? Be there not many of us that have as deep a share likewise in injustice and oppression, in vexing the

fatherlesse and the widows? I wish it may not prove some of our cases at that last day to use such pleas as these unto Christ in our behalfe: ‘Lord, I have prophesied in thy name,’ I have preached many a zealous sermon for thee, I have kept many a long fast, I have been very active for thy cause in church, in state, nay, I never made any question but that my name was written in thy book of life; when yet alas we shall receive no other return from Christ but this—‘I know you not: depart from me ye workers of iniquity.’ I am sure there be too many of us that have long pretended to Christ, which make little or no progresse in true Christianity, that is, holinesse of life; that ever hang hovering in a twilight of grace, and never seriously put our selves forwards into clear day-light, but esteeme that glimmering crepusculum which we are in, and like that faint twilight better then broad open day: whereas, ‘the path of the just (as the Wiseman speaketh) is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.’ I am sure there be many of us that are perpetuall dwarfs in our spirituall stature, like those ‘filly women (that S. Paul speaks of) laden with finnes and led away with divers lusts, that are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth;’ that are not now one jot taller in Christianity then we were many years ago; but have still as sickly, crazy, and unsound a temper of soul as we had long before. Indeed we seem to do

ſomething, we are alwayes moving and lifting at the ſtone of corruption that lies upon our hearts, but yet we never ſtirre it notwithstanding, or at leaſt never roll it off from us. We are ſometimes a little troubled with the guilt of our finnes, and then we think we muſt thruſt our luſts out of our hearts, but afterwards we ſprinkle our ſelves over with I know not what holy-water, and ſo are contented to let them ſtill abide quietly within us. We do every day truly confeſſe the ſame finnes, and pray againſt them, and yet ſtill commit them as much as ever, and lie as deeply under the power of them. We have the ſame water to pump out in every prayer, and ſtill we let the ſame leake in again upon us. We make a great deal of noiſe, and raiſe a great deal of duſt with our feet; but we do not move from off the ground on which we ſtood, we do not go forward at all: or if we do ſometimes make a little progreſſe, we quickly looſe again the ground which we had gained, like thoſe upper planets in the heaven, which (as the aſtronomers tell us) ſometimes move forwards, ſometimes quite backwards, and ſometimes perfectly ſtand ſtill; have their ſtations and retrogradations, as well as their direct motions. As if religion were nothing elſe but a dancing up and down upon the ſame piece of ground and making ſeverall motions and friſkings on it, and not a ſober journeying and travelling onwards toward ſome certain place. We doe and undoe; we do *Penelopes telam texere*, we



weave sometimes a web of holinesse, but then we let our lusts come, and undoe, and unravell all again. Like Sisyphus in the fable, we roll up a mighty stone with much ado, sweating and tugging up the hill, and then we let it go, and tumble down again unto the bottome; and this is our constant work. Like those Danaides which the poets speak of, we are alwayes filling water into a sieve by our prayers, duties, and performances, which still runs out as fast as we poure it in. What is it that thus cheats us and gulls us of our religion? That makes us thus constantly to tread the same ring and circle of duties, where we make no progresse at all forwards; and the further we go are still never the nearer to our journey's end? What is it that thus starves our religion, and makes it look like those kine in Pharaoh's dream, ill-favoured and lean-fleshed, that it hath no colour in its face, no blood in its veines, no life nor heat at all in its members? What is it that doth thus bedwarfe us in our christianity? What low, fordid, and unworthy principles do we act by, that thus hinder our growth, and make us stand at a stay, and keep us alwayes in the very porch and entrance where we first began? Is it a sleepey, sluggish conceit, that it is enough for us, if we be but once in a state of grace, if we have but once stepped over the threshold, we need not take so great paines to travel any further? Or is it another damping, choaking, stifling opinion, that Christ hath done all

for us already without us, and nothing need more to be done within us? No matter, how wicked we be in our selves, for we have holinesse without us; no matter how sickly and diseased our souls be within, for they have health without them. Why may we not as well be satisfied and contented to have happinesse without us too to all eternity, and so our selves forever continue miserable? ‘Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doth righteousnesse is righteous, even as he is righteous; but he that committeth sinne is of the Devil.’ I shall therefore exhort you in the wholesome words of S. Peter; ‘Give all diligence, to adde to your faith, vertue; and to vertue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; to patience, godlinesse; and to godlinesse, brotherly kindnesse; and to brotherly kindnesse, charity; for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitfull in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ The apostle still goes on, and I cannot leave him yet; ‘But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was once purged from his old finnes. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.’ Let us not onely talk and dispute of Christ, but let us ‘indeed put on the Lord Jesus Christ.’ Having those great and precious promises, which he hath given us, let us

strive to be made partakers of the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust: and being begotten again to a lively hope of enjoying Christ hereafter, let us purifie our selves as he is pure. Let us really declare, that we know Christ, that we are his disciples, by our keeping of his commandments; and amongst the rest, that commandment especially which our Saviour Christ himself commendeth to his disciples in a peculiar manner; ‘This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you:’ and again; ‘These things I command you, that you love one another.’ ‘Let us follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which, no man shall see God. Let us put on as the elect of God, holy, and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave us: And above all these things let us put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. Let us in meekness, instruct those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth, that they may recover themselves out of the snares of the Devil, that are taken captive by him at his will. Beloved, let us love another, for love is of God, and whosoever loveth is born of God and knoweth God.’ O divine love! the sweet harmony of souls! the musick of angels! The joy of God’s

own heart, the very darling of his bosome! the source of true happiness! the pure quintessence of heaven! That which reconciles the jarring principles of the world, and makes them all chime together! That which melts men's hearts into one another! See how S. Paul describes it, and it cannot choose but enamour your affections towards it: 'Love envieth not, it is not puffed up, it doth not behave it self unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things:' I may add in a word, it is the best natured thing, the best complexioned thing, in the world. Let us express this sweet harmonious affection, in these jarring times; that so if it be possible, we may tune the world at last, into better music. Especially, in matters of religion, let us strive with all meekness to instruct and convince one another. Let us endeavour to promote the Gospel of peace, the dove-like Gospel with a dove-like spirit. This was the way by which the Gospel at first was propagated in the world: Christ did not cry, nor lift up his voice in the streets, a bruised reed he did not break, and the smoking flax he did not quench, and yet he brought forth judgement into victory. He whispered the Gospel to us from mount Sion, in a still voice, and yet the sound thereof went out quickly throughout all the earth. The Gospel at first came down upon the world gently and softly,

like the dew upon Gideon's fleece, and yet it quickly soaked quite through it: and doubtlesse this is still the most effectuall way to promote it further. Sweetnesse, and ingenuity, will more powerfully command men's minds, then passion, sowrenesse, and severity; as the soft pillow sooner breaks the flint, then the hardest marble. Let us ἀληθεύειν ἐν ἀγάπῃ, follow truth in love; and of the two indeed, be contented rather, to misse of the conveying of a speculative truth, then to part with love. When we would convince men of any error by the strength of truth, let us withall pour the sweet balme of love upon their heads. Truth and love, are two the most powerfull things in the world, and when they both go together, they cannot easily be withstood. The golden beams of truth, and the filken cords of love, twisted together, will draw men on with a sweet violence whether they will or no. Let us take heed we do not sometimes call that zeal for God, and his Gospel, which is nothing else, but our own tempestuous and stormy passion. True zeal is a sweet, heavenly, and gentle flame, which maketh us active for God, but alwayes within the sphere of love. It never calls for fire from heaven, to consume those that differ a little from us in their apprehensions. It is like that kind of lightning (which the philosophers speak of), that melts the sword within, but singeth not the scabbard; it strives to save the soul but hurteth not the body. True zeal is a loving thing, and makes

us alwayes active to edification, and not to destruction. If we keep the fire of zeal within the chimney, in its own proper place, it never doth any hurt; it onely warmeth, quickeneth, and enliveneth us: but if once we let it break out, and catch hold of the thatch of our flesh, and kindle our corrupt nature, and set the house of our body on fire, it is no longer zeal, it is no heavenly fire, it is a most destructive and devouring thing. True zeal is an *ignis lambens*, a soft and gentle flame, that will not scorch one's hand; it is no predatory or voracious thing: but carnall and fleshly zeal is like the spirit of gunpowder set on fire, that tears and blows up all that stands before it. True zeal is like the vitall heat in us, that we live upon, which we never feel to be angry or troublesome; but though it gently feed upon the radicall oyl within us, that sweet balsame of our naturall moisture; yet it lives lovingly with it, and maintains that by which it is fed: but that other furious and distempered zeal is nothing but a fever in the soul. To conclude, we may learn what kind of zeal it is, that we should make use of in promoting the Gospel, by an emblem of God's own, given us in the Scripture, those fiery tongues that upon the day of Pentecost sate upon the apostles; which sure were harmlesse flames, for we cannot reade that they did any hurt, or that they did so much as singe an haire of their heads. I will therefore shut up this, with that of the apostle: 'Let us keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'

Let this soft and filken knot of love tie our hearts together ; though our heads and apprehensions cannot meet, as, indeed, they never will, but alwayes stand at some distance off from one another. Our zeal, if it be heavenly, if it be true vestall fire, kindled from above, it will not delight to tarry here below, burning up straw and stubble, and such combustible things, and sending up nothing but grosse earthly fumes to heaven ; but it will rise up, and return back, pure as it came down, and will be ever striving to carry up men's hearts to God along with it. It will be onely occupied about the promoting of those things, which are unquestionably good ; and when it moves in the irascible way, it will quarrel with nothing but sinne. Here let our zeal busie and exercise it self, every one of us beginning first at our own hearts. Let us be more zealous then ever we have yet been, in fighting against our lusts, in pulling down those strongholds of sinne and Satan in our hearts. Here let us exercise all our courage and resolution, our manhood and magnanimitie. Let us trust in the almighty arme of our God, and doubt not but he will as well deliver us from the power of sinne in our hearts, as preserve us from the wrath to come. Let us go out against these uncircumcised Philistines, I mean our lusts, not with shield or spear, not in any confidence of our own strength, but in the name of the Lord of Hosts, and we shall prevail : we shall overcome our lusts ; for greater

is he that is in us, then he that is in them. The eternall God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: he shall thrust out these enemies from before us, and he shall say, Destroy them. We shall enter the true Canaan, the good land of promise, 'that floweth with milk and honey,' the land of truth and holiness. 'Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand: let your loins be girt about with truth; have on the breastplate of righteousness; and let your feet be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. Above all, take the shield of faith, whereby you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.' And lastly, be sure of this, 'That ye be strong onely in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' There be some that dishearten us in this spirituall warfare, and would make us let our weapons fall out of our hands, by working in us a despair of victory. There be some 'evil spies,' that weaken the hands and the hearts of the children of Israel; and bring an ill report upon that land that we are to conquer, telling of nothing but strange gyants, the sonnes of Anak, there, that we shall never be able to overcome. 'The Amalekites (say they) dwell in the south, the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, in the mountains, and the Canaanites by the sea-coast: huge armies of tall invincible lusts: 'We shall never be able to go against this people;'



we shall never be able to prevail against our corruptions. Harken not unto them (I beseech you) but hear what Caleb and Joshuah say: 'Let us go up at once, and possess it, for we are able to overcome them:' not by our own strength, but by the power of the 'Lord of Hosts.' There are indeed 'sonnes of Anak there;' there are mighty gyantlike lusts that we are to grapple with; nay, there are 'principalities and powers,' too, that we are to oppose: but the great Michael, the 'Captain of the Lord's Host,' is with us; he commands in chief for us, and we need not be dismayed. 'Understand, therefore, this day, that the Lord thy God is he, which goeth before thee as a consuming fire; he shall destroy these enemies, and bring them down before thy face.' If thou wilt be faithfull to him, and put thy trust in him, as the fire consumeth the stubble, and as the flame burneth up the chaff, so will he destroy thy lusts in thee: their root shall be rottenesse, and their blossome shall go up as dust. But let us take heed that we be not discouraged, and before we begin to fight, despair of victorie: but to believe and hope well in the power of our God and his strength, will be half a conquest. Let us not think, holinesse in the hearts of men here in the world, is a forlorn, forsaken, and outcast thing from God, that he hath no regard of. Holinesse, where-ever it is, though never so small, if it be but hearty and sincere, it can  
o more be cut off, and discontinued from God,

then a sunbeam here upon earth can be broken off from its intercourse with the sun, and be left alone amidst the mire and dirt of this world. The sun may as well discard its own rayes, and banish them from it self, into some region of darknesse, far remote from it, where they shall have no dependence at all upon it; as God can forsake and abandon holineffe in the world, and leave it a poore orphan thing, that shall have no influence at all from him to preserve and keep it. Holineffe is something of God, where-ever it is; it is an efflux from him, that alwayes hangs upon him, and lives in him; as the sunbeams, though they guild this lower world, and spread their golden wings over us; yet they are not so much here, where they shine, as in the sun, from whence they flow. God cannot draw a curtain betwixt himself and holineffe, which is nothing, but the splendor and shining of himself: He cannot hide his face from it, he cannot desert it, in the world. He that is once born of God shall overcome the world, and the Prince of this world too, by the power of God in him. Holineffe is no solitary neglected thing; it hath stronger confederacies, greater alliances than sinne and wickednesse. It is in league with God, and the whole universe; the whole creation smiles upon it: there is something of God in it, and therefore it must needs be a victorious and triumphant thing. Wickednesse is a weak, cowardly, and guilty thing, a fearfull and trembling shadow. It is the child of

ignorance and darknesse ; it is afraid of light, and cannot possibly withstand the power of it, nor endure the fight of its glittering armour. It is allied to none, but wretched, forlorn, and apostate spirits, that do what they can to support their own weak and tottering kingdome of darknesse: but are onely strong in weaknesse and impotency. The whole politie and commonwealth of devils is not so powerfull as one child of light, one babe in Christ: they are not all able to quench the least smoking flax, to extinguish one spark of grace. Darknesse is not able to make resistance against light, but ever as it comes, flies before it. But if wickednesse invite the society of devils to it (as we learn by the sad experience of these present times, in many examples of those that were possessed with malice, revengfulness, and lust); so that those cursed fiends do most readily apply themselves to it, and offer their service to feed it and encourage it, because it is their own life and nature, their own kingdome of darknesse, which they strive to enlarge, and to spread the dominions of: shall we then think that holinesse, which is so nearly allied unto God, hath no good genius at all in the world, to attend upon it, to help it, and encourage it. Shall not the kingdome of light be as true to its own interest, and as vigilant for the enlarging of it self, as the kingdome of darknesse? Holinesse is never alone in the world, but God is alwayes with it, and his loving Spirit doth ever associate, and joyn it self

to it. He that sent it into the world, is with it, as Christ speaketh of himself, ‘The Father hath not left me alone, because I do alwayes those things that please him.’ Holineffe is the life of God, which he cannot but feed and maintain, wheresoever it is; and as the devils are alwayes active to encourage evil, so we cannot imagine but that the heavenly host of blessed angels above, are as busily employed in the promoting of that which they love best, that which is dearest to God, whom they serve, the life and nature of God. ‘There is joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner:’ heaven takes notice of it; there is a quire of angels, that sweetly sings the *Epithalamium* of a foul divorced from sinne and Satan, and espoused unto Christ. What, therefore, the Wiseman speaks concerning Wisdom, I shall apply to Holineffe: ‘Take fast hold of Holineffe, let her not go; keep her, for she is thy life: Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life,’ and of death too. Let nothing be esteemed of greater consequence and concernment to thee, then what thou doest and adest, how thou livest. Nothing without us can make us either happy or miserable; nothing can either defile us or hurt us, but what goeth out from us, what springeth and bubbleth up, out of our own hearts. We have dreadful apprehensions, of the flames of hell without us; we tremble, and are afraid, when we hear of fire and brimstone, whilst, in the mean time, we securely

nouriſh within our own hearts, a true and living hell,

—— Et cæco carpinur igni :

the dark fire of our luſts, conſumeth our bowels within, and miſerably ſcorcheth our ſouls, and we are not troubled at it. We do not perceive, how hell ſteales upon us, whileſt we live here. And as for heaven, we onely gaze abroad, expecting that it ſhould come in to us from without, but never look for the beginnings of it to ariſe within, in our own hearts.

But left there ſhould yet happily remain any prejudice againſt that, which I have all this while heartily commended to you ; true holineſſe and the keeping of Chriſt's commandment, as if it were a legall and fervile thing, that would ſubject us to a ſtate of bondage, I muſt here needs adde a word or two, either for the prevention or removall of it. I do not therefore mean, by holineſſe, the mere performance of outward duties of religion, coldly acted over as a taſk, not our habituall prayings, hearings, faſtings, multiplied one upon another (though theſe be all good, as ſubſervient to an higher end) but I mean an inward ſoul and principle of divine life that ſpiriteth all theſe ; that enliveneth and quickeneth the dead carkaffe of all our outward performances whatſoever. I do not here urge the dead law of outward works, which indeed if it be alone, ſubjects us to a ſtate of bondage ; but the inward law of the

Gospel—the law of the spirit of life, then which nothing can be more free and ingenuous; for it doth not act us by principles without us, but is an inward self-moving principle living in our hearts. I do not urge the law written upon tables of stone without us (though there is still a good use of that too) but the law of holiness written within, upon the fleshly tables of our hearts. The first, though it work us into some outward conformity to God's commandments, and so hath a good effect upon the world; yet we are all this while but like dead instruments of musick, that sound sweetly and harmoniously when they are onely struck and played upon from without by the musician's hand, who hath the theory and law of musick living within himself. But the second, the living law of the Gospel—the law of the spirit of life within us, is as if the soul of musick should incorporate it self with the instrument and live in the strings, and make them of their own accord, without any touch or impulse from without, daunce up and down and warble out their harmonies. They that are acted onely by an outward law are but like Neurospasts, or those little puppets that skip nimbly up and down, and seem to be full of quick and sprightly motion, whereas they are all the while moved artificially by certain wires and strings from without, and not by any principle of motion from themselves within; or else, like clocks and watches that go pretty regular for a while, but are moved by weights and plummets, or some other artificiall springs

that must be ever now and then wound up, or else they cease. But they that are acted by the new law of the Gospel, by the law of the Spirit, they have an inward principle of life in them, that from the centre of it self, puts forth it self freely and constantly into all obedience to the will of Christ. This new law of the Gospel, it is a kind of a musicall soul, informing the dead organ of our hearts, that makes them of their own accord delight to act harmoniously, according to the rule of God's word. The law that I speak of, it is a law of love, which is the most powerfull law in the world; and yet it freeth us in a manner from all law without us, because it maketh us become a law unto our selves. The more it prevaieth in us, the more it eateth up and devoureth all other laws without us; just as Aaron's living rod did swallow up those rods of the magicians, that were made onely to counterfeit a little life:

*Quis Legem det amantibus?  
Major lex Amor est sibi.*

Love is at once a freedom from all law, a state of purest liberty, and yet a law too, of the most constraining and indispensable necessity. The worst law in the world, is 'the law of sinne, which is in our members;' which keeps us in a condition of most absolute slavery, when we are wholly under the tyrannicall commands of our lusts: this is a cruell Pharaoh indeed, that sets his hard task-masters

over us, and maketh us wretchedly drudge in mire and clay. The 'law of the letter' without us, sets us in a condition of a little more liberty, by restraining of us from many outward acts of sinne; but yet it doth not disenthral us from the power of sinne in our hearts. But the 'law of the spirit of life,' the gospel-law of love, it puts us into a condition of most pure and perfect liberty; and whosoever really entertaines this law, he hath 'thrust out Hagar' quite, he hath 'cast out the bondwoman and her children;' from henceforth, 'Sarah the free woman,' shall live forever with him, and she shall be to him, a mother of many children; her seed shall be 'as the sand of the sea-shore for number,' and 'as the starres of heaven.' Here is evangelicall liberty—here is Gospel freedome, when 'the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made us free from the law of sinne and death:' when we have a liberty from sinne, and not a liberty to sinne: for our dear Lord and Master hath told us, that 'whosoever committeth sinne, he is the servant of it.' He that lies under the power and vassalage of his base lusts, and yet talks of Gospel-freedome; he is but like a poore condemned prisoner, that in his sleep dreams of being set at liberty, and of walking up and down wheresoever he pleaseth; whilst his legs are all the while lock't fast in fetters and irons. To please our selves with a notion of Gospel-liberty, whilst we have not a Gospel-principle of holiness within us, to free us from the power



of sinne, it is nothing else, but to gild over our bonds and fetters, and to phancy our selves to be in a golden cage. There is a straitnesse, slavery, and narrownesse in all sinne: sinne crowds and crumples up our souls, which if they were freely spread abroad, would be as wide, and as large as the whole universe. No man is truly free, but he that hath his will enlarged to the extent of God's own will, by loving whatsoever God loves, and nothing else. Such a one, doth not fondly hug this and that particular created good thing, and envassal himself unto it, but he loveth every thing that is lovely, beginning at God, and descending down to all his creatures, according to the severall degrees of perfection in them. He enjoyes a boundlesse liberty, and a boundlesse sweetnesse, according to his boundlesse love. He inclaspeth the whole world within his outstretched arms, his soul is as wide as the whole universe, as big as 'yesterday, to day, and forever.' Whosoever is once acquainted with this disposition of spirit, he never desires any thing else: and he loves the 'life of God' in himself, dearer then his own life. To conclude this therefore; if we love Christ, and 'keep his commandments, his commandments will not be grievous to us: his yoke will be easie, and his burden light: ' it will not put us into a state of bondage, but of perfect liberty. For it is most true of evangelicall obedience, what the Wiseman speaketh of wisdom; 'her wayes are wayes of pleasantnesse, and all her paths are peace;

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